

V. REMARKS

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. The claim is amended to obviate the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3 and 5 are rejected under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by JP 2004-098780. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over JP 2004-098780. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The tension bridge applies suitable tension against the inner wall of the by means of the point contact projection based on its flat shape. The point contact projection contacts the guide groove at a point that reduces the friction or resistance.

When the point contact projection is deteriorated, the non-contact projection will come into contact with the guide groove that reduces the backlash.

Support from the specification is as follows:

[0168] As shown in FIG. 3, a degree of flexibility is achieved at the sliding units 24 and 24 at the sliding door 23 by adopting a notched shape over a predetermined range (matching the width of the guide grooves 25) which includes projected portions 24a and 24a and a recessed portion 24b located between the projected portions, all formed along the sliding direction, as shown in FIG. 3. In addition, a tension applying means 27 is formed at each projected portion 24a so as to apply a desired level of tension between the sliding door and the guide grooves 25.

[0169] As shown in enlargements in FIGS. 4 and 5, the tension applying means 27 each include a linear non-contact projection 30 which projects out from the projected portion 24a. The projection 30 the projection assumes a substantially circular shape

and has a clearance of 1 mm or less from the guide groove 25. At the center of a tension bridge 32 surrounded by the non-contact projection 30, a point contact projection 31 is formed to come into contact with the inner side surface of the guide groove 25. Namely, elasticity can be achieved easily at the tension bridge 32, which is flat, and thus, a desired level of tension can be applied to the point contact projection 31.

[0170] The point contact projection 31 achieves point contact with the guide groove 25 and, for this reason, only a minimal increase in resistance occurs. As the point contact projection 31 is used over a number of years, it may become worn or collapse, but even in such an eventuality, the lower non-contact portion 30 set at a position lower than the projection by 1 mm or less comes into contact with the inner surface of the guide groove 25, thereby still preventing rattling. It is to be noted that such a tension applying means 27 is disposed at two positions at each sliding unit 24 and thus, the effect is dependable. The tension applying means 27 may instead adopt a structure shown in FIG. 6. In this example, each tension applying means includes two point contact projections 31 each formed on a tension rib 33. The sliding door 23 with the tension applying means 27 structured as described above can be manufactured through vertical die cutting, which only requires inexpensive dies, thereby allowing the manufacturing cost to be lowered.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of the pending claims as amended and discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully requested that the claims be rejoined to the application. Particularly, it is respectfully requested that at least claims 2 and 6-20 be rejoined to the application because all of these claims depend from claim 1, which is believed to be allowable.

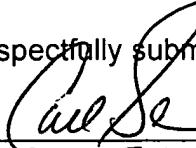
It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance over the prior art of record. Therefore, this Amendment is believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to set forth further arguments and remarks supporting the patentability of their claims, including the separate patentability of the dependent claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Dated: October 20, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

By   
Carl Schaukowitch

Registration No.: 29,211  
RADER, FISHMAN & GRAUER PLLC  
Customer Number: 23353  
Attorney for Applicant

Enclosures: Amendment Transmittal

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